

# A TRIPARTITION OF COMPLEMENTIZERS: EXPLORING CLAUSE SIZE IN ROMANCE

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**Abstract.** This article presents a crosslinguistic study of Romance infinitival complementizers *a* and *de*. The proposal is that *a/de* are acategorial and can be merged in various positions in the CP-field, the TP-field, and the vP-field. Furthermore, we demonstrate that clause size varies extensively from one environment to the other, and from one language to the other, which leads us to argue against a one-size-fits-all approach.

**Keywords:** complementizers, infinitives, clause size, prepositions

## 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

The Latin prepositions *ad* and *de* have evolved into elements that introduce infinitives across Romance (Vincent 1988: 66-70, Schulte 2007, Ledgeway 2016: 1013-1023), where they can be preceded by different verbal classes (including modals, desideratives, factives, aspectuals, etc.) – from now on, we refer to them as *a/de*. They are often called ‘prepositional complementizers’ in the literature, in reference to their mixed nature (see Luján 1980, Rizzi 1997, Kayne 1999, Borsley 2001, Schulte 2007: ch. 7; Delicado-Cantero 2013, a.o.). To date, there exists no consensus about the status and structural position of *a/de* + infinitive. Firstly, some approaches consider them to be complementizers located in the C-area (see Cinque 1990: 34-35, Rizzi 1997 for Italian, and Kayne 1999 and Tellier 2018 for French),<sup>4</sup> including analyses of Control, which propose that the embedded clause contains a CP – or until FinP at least (Pesetsky 1991, Landau 2000). Secondly, other proposals analyse *a/de* + infinitive as genuine prepositions occupying a C position (see Martineau and Motapanyane 2000 for French). Thirdly, the link between prepositions and complementizers has led some authors to reconsider the

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<sup>4</sup> Kayne (1999) postulates that these elements are merged in a lower position, above VP, in the embedded clause and acquire their complementizer status throughout the derivation. This author argues in favour of the nominal nature of Romance infinitives and postulates that *de* acts as an attractor of the infinitive, which moves to the specifier of the complementizer. See Borsley (2001) for a critical analysis of Kayne’s approach.

nature of complementizers themselves and propose a non-C-position for them, whether they introduce finite or non-finite embedded clauses (Manzini & Savoia 2003 and subseq., Roussou 2010, a.o.). Along these lines, Kayne (2016) suggests that, in particular, *de* (as well as English *for*) might not be an external-merged head in the CP-area but instead a subpart of a determiner; and Manzini & Savoia (2018: §4) claim that they head PPs. Although these latter approaches present an illuminating unifying analysis, which highlights the analogy between complement clauses and relative clauses, we show in this paper that *a/de* do not display a monolithic nature and need separate analyses.

The main goal of this paper is to argue against a unified approach of *a/de*. To this end, we examine the nature of the matrix predicate and the structure of the infinitival clause with data from Ibero-Romance, Gallo-Romance, Italo-Romance, and Romanian. We present evidence supporting a distinction between fully fledged prepositions and complementizers, arguing that *a/de* occupy different positions in the clausal spine depending on the predicate type and the language. Specifically, we propose a tripartite analysis: high complementizers in the CP-field, mid complementizers in the TP-field, and low complementizers in the vP-field. This framework, in turn, counters a uniform approach to clause size in Romance, as the position of the complementizer serves as a diagnostic for infinitival clause size, which we argue varies with the matrix verb and the language. Ultimately, the paper leads us to question the nature of complementizers themselves.

The structure of the paper is the following: section 2 distinguishes prepositions from complementizers and offers an analysis of high complementizers based on data from Catalan and Spanish; section 3 explores the position and function of mid complementizers using data from Romanian and Catalan; section 4 examines low complementizers based on data from Old French and Old Italian aspectual verbs; section 5 presents our conclusions.

## 2. HIGH COMPLEMENTIZERS

We begin with high complementizers, namely elements that are merged in the CP-field. In this section we analyse *de* and *a* preceded by subject control verbs and heading infinitival embedded clauses in Catalan and Spanish. We argue in favour of a distinction between fully fledged prepositions, briefly examined in section 2.1, and real complementizers, analysed in section 2.2 – we call them ‘real’ complementizers to differentiate them from prepositions, and we acknowledge that what determines a ‘real’ complementizer may be further challenged. We then consider restructuring predicates in section 2.3 in order to determine the nature of *a/de* and the size of the infinitival clause they introduce. While previous works have argued that restructuring and transparency effects (e.g. clitic climbing, long object movement) are a reliable test to the analysis of clause size and the nature of *a/de*, we gather evidence against this view. An analysis of the structural positions occupied by *a/de* is presented in section 2.4.

### 2.1. Fully fledged prepositions

The following examples from Catalan (1) and Spanish (2) show *a/de* preceded by subject control verbs selecting for an infinitival clause. Note that the presence of *a/de* in all these cases is mandatory.

- (1) a. Aspiro **\*(a)** escalar l'Everest. (Catalan)  
aspire to climb.INF the=Everest  
'I aspire to climb the Everest.'
- b. L'Arnau es recorda **\*(d')** haver-ho dit.  
the=Arnau REFL remembers of=have=it said  
'Arnau remembers having said this.'
- (2) a. Marina se arrepintió **\*(de)** no venir a la cena. (Spanish)  
Marina REFL regretted of NEG come.INF to the dinner  
'Marina regretted not having come to dinner.'
- b. Pablo no se atrevia **\*(a)** hablar en público.  
Pablo NEG REFL dared to talk.INF in public  
'Pablo didn't dare to talk in public.'

We argue that all these instances of *a/de* involve fully fledged prepositions since they also appear with nominal complements, in which case their presence is obligatory as well. Compare (1) with (3), and (2) with (4).

- (3) a. Aspiro **\*(a)** un ascens. (Catalan)  
aspire to a promotion  
'I aspire to a promotion.'
- b. L'Arnau es recorda **\*(d')** aquestes paraules.  
the=Arnau REFL remembers of these words  
'Arnau remembers these words.'
- (4) a. Marina se arrepintió **\*(de)** sus palabras. (Spanish)  
Marina REFL regretted of her words  
'Marina regretted her words.'
- b. Pablo no se atrevía **\*(a)** nada.  
Pablo NEG REFL dared to nothing  
'Pablo dared nothing.'

The pronominalisation of the embedded clause is another test that shows its prepositional nature. The clause is not a direct object (we illustrate with Catalan data, since Spanish lacks prepositional/oblique clitics): infinitives introduced by subject control verbs selecting *de* are pronominalised by the partitive clitic *en*, and those headed by *a* are pronominalised by the locative clitic *hi*.<sup>5</sup> The sentences in (5) illustrate this with the same predicates as (1) and (3).

- (5) a. **Hi** aspiro, a parlar  
there aspire, to speak.INF  
'To speak, that's what I aspire to'
- b. L'Arnau no se'n recorda, d'haver-ho dit.  
the=Arnau NEG REF=PART remembers of=have.inf=it said  
'Arnau does not remember having said that.'

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<sup>5</sup> These pronominalisation patterns are observed in other Romance varieties, with the locative pronominalising *a* + infinitive and the partitive pronominalising *de* + infinitive (cf. Catalan, Occitan, French, Italian).

We conclude that all instances of *a/de* (+ infinitive) passing the aforementioned tests are fully fledged prepositions, heading a PP and selecting an infinitival clause, and must be distinguished from real complementizers, which we explore in the next section.

## 2.2. ‘Real’ complementizers

In this section we analyse cases that, at first glance, appear similar to those presented in 2.1. The structures also involve control verbs selecting for an infinitival clause, as shown with Catalan in (6). There are two main visible differences with respect to the ones examined in the previous section: they only involve *de* and its presence is optional (Bonet 2002: §19.10, IEC 2016: §26.5.1), with very few exceptions, like *dir de* ‘suggest’ (7) as well as *provar de/mirar de* ‘try’.<sup>6</sup> We argue below that whether *de* is optional or not is not a reliable test to assess its nature. Note that the predicates in (6) and (7) can select for either an infinitive or a subjunctive (in which case the complementizer is *que*), an alternation we incorporate in our analysis.

- (6) a. Hem decidit **(de)** venir abans. (desiderative)  
 have decided of come.INF early  
 ‘We decided to come earlier.’
- b. Vaig decidir **que** vinguessis abans.  
 go decide.INF that come.IMPV.SUBJ earlier  
 ‘I decided that you should come earlier.’
- (7) a. Vaig dir **\*(de)** tornar-hi. (directive)  
 go say.INF of go-back.INF=there  
 ‘I suggested to go back there.’
- b. Vaig dir **que** hi tornessis  
 go say.INF that there go-back.IMPV.SUBJ  
 ‘I suggested that you go back there.’

Apart from desideratives (6) and directive verbs (7), this alternation also applies to implicative verbs (e.g., *evitar (de)* ‘avoid’), try-verbs (e.g., *intentar (de)*), and factives (e.g., *lamentar (de)*).<sup>7</sup> It has been used by previous authors to argue that *de* and *que* are reflexes of the embedded domain (Bonet 2002, Tordera-Yllescas 2017) and, consequently, to demonstrate that both can be analysed as mood-marking elements within the CP-field.

Some of these verbs, like *decidir* ‘decide’, can also be used as propositional verbs (using Landau’s terms 2000), as we illustrate in (8).<sup>8</sup> In this case, however, *decidir* can select either an infinitive or indicative (unlike (6) and (7), where the alternation is between infinitive and subjunctive). As opposed to what we observe with the subjunctive, the mood of indicative clauses is not overtly marked by the Spell-Out realisation of a C-head, as

<sup>6</sup> The omission of *de* gives rise to a change of meaning: *dir* ‘say’, *mirar* ‘see’, as well as *provar*, which can have different meanings (‘test’, ‘demonstrate’, ‘go down well’ etc.).

<sup>7</sup> *Provar/mirar \*(de)* ‘try’ + infinitive are an exception; they can only appear with infinitives. Recall that these verbs acquire a meaning like ‘try’ when they precede an infinitive; otherwise, they have different uses (see footnote 7).

<sup>8</sup> Verbs displaying these patterns include *prometre* ‘promise’ and *admetre* ‘admit’.

depicted by (8), where *de* is ruled out. These examples further confirm that *de* in (6) and (7) alternates with *que*<sub>subjunctive</sub>. Since *de* and *que* both appear with the same matrix verbs but introduce embedded clauses of different moods (*de* with infinitives, *que* with subjunctives), *de* must also be in the CP-field. We take these facts as a sign that the distribution of *de* + infinitive is tied to the same structural domain as *que* + subjunctive in (6) and (7).

- (8) a. He decidit (\*d')haver fet les coses bé.  
 have decided of have.INF done the things well  
 'I decided that I had done things well'
- b. He decidit **que** vaig fer les coses bé.  
 have decided that go.PRES.IND do.INF the things well  
 'I decided that I had done things well'

While Spanish normally lacks the complementizer *de* (unlike Catalan, Occitan, French and Italian, and much like Portuguese, Galician and Asturian), it nevertheless offers isolated examples of *de* + infinitive, notably with *decir* (Sp. *Dijiste \*(de) venir antes* 'You suggested to come earlier to get a good spot'). As we indicated above for the equivalent structure in Catalan (7a), we show below that despite *de* being obligatory in this case, it is a complementizer located in the CP-field.

In some Peninsular and American varieties of Spanish, however, *de* + infinitive is also used with control verbs selecting for an infinitival embedded clause (9). This phenomenon has been called *deísmo* (RAE-ASALE 2009), and its dialectal distribution is notoriously difficult to capture.<sup>9</sup>

- (9) a. Y mis hijas [...], pos están deseandito **de** venir  
 and my daughters so are wishing of come.INF  
 'And my daughters [...] well, they are willing to come.'  
 (COSER-2114, Gil Márquez, Huelva, cited by De Benito and Pato 2015: 37)
- b. Pues nada, pues ya... decidimos **de** casarnos y...  
 so nothing so anyway decide of get-marry=us and  
 'And so, well, anyway... we decided to get married and...'  
 (COSER-2914, Sieteiglesias, Madrid)

*Deísmo* constitutes a complex phenomenon involving unstable patterns (Di Tullio 2011, Camus 2013, De Benito and Pato 2015, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez and Pérez-Ocón 2023, a.o.), and an in-depth analysis goes beyond the scope of this paper. Yet it is relevant for our discussion here since this *de* does not behave as a fully fledged preposition, as we show below, and can therefore be analysed as occupying the CP-field.

We argue that all the instances of *de* + infinitive discussed in the present subsection are complementizers, and not prepositions. Previous works argued that one of the properties defining fully fledged prepositions is that their presence is obligatory. If this line of reasoning is correct, then one should consider cases of obligatory *de* (like Cat. *dir de* 'say',

<sup>9</sup> The list of verbs appearing with *de* in Spanish includes a wide-range of verbal classes, like perceptive verbs and causatives, and it may vary across dialects (De Benito and Pato 2015). See the aforementioned works for a detailed analysis of verbs displaying *deísmo*. For a diachronic analysis of the presence of *de* heading infinitival clauses, see also Schulte (2007) and Delicado-Cantero (2013).

Sp. *decir de* ‘say’ and Cat. *provar de/mirar de* ‘try’) to be prepositions (analogous to those explored in section 2.1). However, empirical evidence disproves this. The tests provided in (10-13) below indicate that obligatory *de* (+ infinitive) patterns like optional *de* (+ infinitive), giving evidence for a unitary analysis of all these cases as complementizers.

Unlike embedded clauses introduced by fully fledged prepositions (see section 2.1), all these cases are pronominalisable by the neutral accusative pronoun *ho* in Catalan (10) and the predicative *lo* ‘it’ in Spanish (11) (Rizzi 1991: 516). Note that this occurs even in cases in which *de* is mandatory, as with *provar de/mirar de* ‘try’ (10b). As explained above in section 2.1, if they were fully fledged prepositions, they would be pronominalised with the locative *hi* or the partitive *en*.

- (10) a. No **ho** va poder evitar (parlar amb ells). (Catalan)  
 NEG it goes can.INF avoid-INF (talk.INF with them)  
 ‘(S)he couldn’t avoid it (talking to them).’  
 b. Prova/mira-**ho** (de parlar amb la cap); potser a tu sí que t’escolta.  
 try/see=it (of talk.INF with the head); maybe to you yes that you=listen  
 ‘Try this’ (to talk to the boss); she might listen to you.’  
 (11) a. **Lo** he decidido (ir de vacaciones) (Spanish)  
 it have decided (go.INF to vacation)  
 ‘I decided it (to go on vacation)  
 b. **Lo** propuse (encontrarnos a las 6)  
 it proposed (meet=us to the 6)  
 ‘I suggested to meet at 6’

Moreover, if they were fully fledged prepositions, we would expect them to also appear before nominal complements, contrary to the case (12)-(13).<sup>10</sup> This additional test further confirms that the cases of *de* discussed here are in the CP-field.

- (12) a. Evita (**\*d’**) aquest viatge.  
 avoid of this trip  
 ‘Avoid this trip.’  
 b. Prova/Mira (**\*d’**) una cosa.  
 try/see of=a thing  
 ‘Try this.’  
 (13) a. He decidido (**\*de**) el menú para el banquet. (Spanish)  
 have decided of the menu to the banquet  
 ‘I decided the banquet menu.’  
 b. He propuesto (**\*de**) este viaje.  
 have proposed of this trip  
 ‘I suggested this trip.’

Finally, as we pointed out above, fully fledged prepositions do not show restrictions regarding the verbal class heading them (section 2.1). Conversely, all instances of *de* presented in this section are subject to the same restriction: as we indicated in (8), *de* is

<sup>10</sup> (12b) without *de* is grammatical but both verbs acquire another meaning (see footnote 7 above).

ruled out with propositional verbs in Catalan. It is interesting to note that Spanish varieties displaying *de* + infinitive seem to show the same restriction, as indicated by Di Tullio (2011) and De Benito and Pato (2015).<sup>11</sup>

Given the aforementioned facts, we conclude that all instances of *de* + infinitive do not show a monolithic nature, but a distinction between fully fledged prepositions (section 2.1) and complementizers (present section) must be made.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3. Prepositions and complementizers in restructuring contexts

In this section we analyse the intersection between the presence of *a/de* heading infinitival clauses and restructuring.<sup>13</sup> We want to demonstrate that transparency effects, and especially clitic climbing, are not a reliable test to define the nature of *a/de*.

A common assumption in the restructuring literature is that the presence of *a* or *de* blocks restructuring effects, as these elements are taken to signal a richer, fully fledged infinitival clause with additional embedding layers. However, this generalisation does not always hold, as we illustrate below.

Recall from section 2.2 that *de* behaves as a genuine complementizer in *dir de* ‘suggest’, *evitar de* ‘avoid’, and *proposar de* ‘suggest’, as it passes the relevant tests. The same conclusion applies to *a* with the verb *aprendre* ‘learn’. By contrast, we demonstrated in section 2.1 (see examples (2b) and (4b)) that *a* with the verb *atrevir-se* ‘dare’ passes the tests that identify fully fledged prepositions. In light of this, examples (14) and (15) below involve real complementizers, whereas (16) contains true prepositions. Crucially, clitic climbing is attested in all three configurations (with the clitic underlined), showing that the presence of either complementizers or prepositions does not systematically block restructuring effects.

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<sup>11</sup> Data analysed by Di Tullio (2011) reveal that the presence of *de* imposes a prospective reading on the infinitive. However, as De Benito and Pato (2015) show there are some varieties in which *de* precedes compound infinitives:

- (i) Y no me pesa **de** haberme quedao en el campo  
and NEG me weighs of have.INF=me stayed in the field  
‘And I do not regret [de] having stayed in the countryside’

(COSER - 2103, Bonares, Huelva, cited by De Benito and Pato 2015: 36)

These cases involve factive verbs, instead of propositional verbs. The former select for subjunctive complements, which reinforces the link between the presence of *de* and the alternation between infinitive and subjunctive mentioned above (cf. the impossibility of combining propositional verbs with *de* in Catalan, cf. (8)). We leave for further research the task of producing a fine-grained analysis of this correlation.

<sup>12</sup> The status of *de* in *deísmo* has been also considered a complementizer. See Di Tullio (2011) and Camus (2013) for an analysis along these lines.

<sup>13</sup> We understand restructuring as a syntactic environment whereby the matrix verb selects for a complement (generally a non-finite form) that acts as a transparent domain – either because it does not project all layers or because it involves non-phasal domains. Since Rizzi (1976), restructuring is diagnosed through a series of interclausal phenomena, dubbed ‘transparency effects’, like clitic climbing or long object movement.

- (14) a. La Gina hi va dir **d'**anar una mica abans. (Catalan).  
 the Gina there goes say.INF of=go.INF a bit early  
 'Gina suggested to go there earlier.'
- b. Jo hi evitaria **d'**anar sol.  
 I there would-avoid of=go.INF alone  
 'I would avoid going there on your own.'
- (15) a. Marta lo proposo **de** hacer por la mañana. (Spanish).  
 Marta it proposed of have.INF for the morning  
 'Marta suggested to do it in the morning.'
- b. Lo aprendimos **a** hablar el año pasado.  
 it learnt to speak.INF the year past  
 'We learnt how to speak it one year ago.'
- (16) a. En Pau s'hi atreveix **a** anar. (Catalan)  
 the Pau REFL=there dares to go.INF  
 'Pau dares to go there.'
- b. Al final, la Júlia hi va accedir **a** participar.  
 to-the end the Júlia there goes access.INF to participate.INF  
 'In the end, Júlia agreed to participate in this.'

All the examples above illustrate that transparency effects are not necessarily blocked in the presence of *a/de*. It is therefore not the presence of the fully fledged preposition (see Luján 1980 for Spanish; and Magro 2004 for European Portuguese) or the complementizer that blocks restructuring, but the nature of the matrix predicate: transparency effects are ruled out with propositional verbs (using Landau's terms 2000) and factives (Paradis 2018, 2019, 2024), two verbal classes that do not belong to the restructuring class (see Paradis 2019, 2024).<sup>14</sup> We illustrate this with the minimal pairs in (17) and (18). In (17a), *insistir* is being used as a desiderative verb, hence clitic climbing is possible; conversely, in (17b) it is used as a propositional verb, and clitic climbing is blocked.

- (17) a. Els nens la insisteixen **a** veure (la pel·lícula)' (Catalan)  
 the kids it insist to watch.INF (the film)  
 'The kids insist on watching it (the movie).'
- b. \*Els nens la insisteixen **a** haver vist (la pel·lícula).  
 the kids it insist to have.INF watched (the film)  
 'The kids insist on having seen it, the film.'

Similarly, the verb *recordar-se de* 'remember' exhibits two uses. When used as an implicative predicate (18a), it behaves as a restructuring verb, as evidenced by the availability of clitic climbing; by contrast, when it has a factive meaning, it is not a

<sup>14</sup> The availability of transparency effects varies across languages and even within the same language; clitic climbing, for instance, shows intra-linguistic variation (cf. Paradis 2019 and references therein). Yet, crucially, propositional and factive verbs block restructuring crosslinguistically (see Wurmbrand 2015 and subseq.; Paradis 2019: chapter 4).

restructuring verb and clitic climbing is blocked (18b). We therefore conclude that the availability of clitic climbing is not a reliable diagnostic for the analysis of *a/de*.

- (18) a. *Me'n* vaig recordar **de** portar tres (de cordes de guitarra).  
 me=PART go remember.INF of bring.INF three (of strings of guitar)  
 'I remembered to bring three (of strings for the guitar).'
- b. \*No *me'n* recordo **d'**haver portat tres (de cordes de guitarra).  
 NEG me=PART remember of=have.INF brought three (of strings of guitar)  
 'I don't remember bringing three (of strings for the guitar).'

The presence of *a/de* in restructuring clauses has also been considered relevant to determine the size of the infinitival clause, and as a result, the position occupied by *a/de*. Focusing on instances where *a/de* do not block transparency effects, as in (14)-(16), some authors have proposed that they are not merged in the CP-field. For instance, some claim that *a/de* are merged with the matrix verb (see Luján 1980 and Herbeck 2013, for Spanish and Catalan) in structures displaying transparency effects. This analysis predicts that the matrix predicate and the complementizer show strict adjacency, contrary to fact (19). Here, the Catalan presuppositional negative marker *pas* 'at all' can appear between the matrix verb and the complementizer, despite the presence of clitic climbing.

- (19) No *ho* va aprendre *pas* a fer. (Catalan)  
 NEG it goes learn.INF NEG to do  
 '(S)he didn't learn to do it at all.'

Note that if such an approach is adopted – that, under the presence of transparency effects, *a/de* occupy a different position than when transparency effects are absent – it implies going back to the traditional assumption that restructuring only takes place under the presence of transparency effects. However, several authors have argued that the lack of transparency effects (in a given language) does not necessarily imply the absence of restructuring (Cinque 2001 and subseq., Paradis 2019, 2024, Olivier 2022). Consequently, the presence or absence of transparency effects cannot determine the nature nor the clausal position of *a/de*.

Within this line of inquiry, Cinque (2004: §8.4) proposes that the structure is invariable, and therefore that *a/de* preceded by restructuring verbs are always merged in a lower position, regardless of the presence or absence of restructuring effects; in particular, he suggests that they introduce a particular functional head located in the extended projection of the lexical VP (Cinque 2004: §8.4). Following the argumentation built so far in the present paper, we reject this unitary approach to *a/de*, and we demonstrate instead that they are merged in different positions in the structure.

## 2.4. Analysis

In the previous section we have shown that *a/de* + infinitive preceded by control verbs cannot receive a unified analysis. The different tests we have applied in 2.1 and 2.2 offer evidence in favour of a distinction between fully fledged prepositions and complementizers. What remains to be discussed is what position is occupied by the complementizer in the clausal spine. We claim that, at least in Catalan, and possibly in

Spanish, control verbs select for an infinitival clause, which extends to FinP, where *de* is merged. Below we offer evidence in favour of this high position based on topicalisation and sentential negation – we call this a ‘high’ position in contrast to ‘mid’ and ‘low’ positions argued for in sections 3 and 4 respectively.

Because *a/de* cannot precede a topic when they are selected by a control verb, they have been postulated to occupy Fin (Rizzi 1997). This test can be difficult to apply since infinitival structures involving topicalisation generally give ungrammatical results in Romance, revealing the defective nature of infinitives. However, as shown by Fernández-Sánchez (2016), some control verbs, like *preferir* ‘prefer’, select for embedded infinitives that present a more active left periphery.<sup>15</sup> In particular, the possibility of targeting clitic left dislocation constituents reveals that a TopP is projected. We show this in (20) (example adapted from Fernández-Sánchez 2016: 117), where *de* occupies Fin since it is preceded by the clitic left dislocated constituent in TopP.

- (20) *Prefereix* [<sub>TopP</sub> *als convidats* [<sub>Fin</sub> *d'* [<sub>TP</sub> *escriure's*                      *personalment*]]] (Catalan)  
 prefer                      to-the guests                      of                      address.INF=to-them myself  
 ‘I prefer to address the guests myself.’

A similar scenario is predicted for Spanish *deista* varieties (discussed in section 2.2), where the topic precedes *de*. The data in (21) further confirm that *de* can follow topics in Catalan and some Spanish varieties, which therefore suggests that the complementizer occupies a position lower than the TopP layer.

- (21) *Propose* [<sub>TopP</sub> *estos documentos* [<sub>Fin</sub> *de* [<sub>TP</sub> *mandarlos*                      *por correo*]]] (Spanish)  
 proposed                      these files                      of                      send.INF=them by post  
 ‘I propose sending these documents by post.’

While these complementizers are lower than TopP, we now need to address how low they are. Using the position of negation, we argue that they occupy a relatively high position on the structure, namely in the (low) CP-field. As examples (22)-(24) show, the negation always appears after *de* in Catalan and Spanish. For these languages, we assume that sentential negation is hosted in a NegP located between CP and TP (see Espinal 1991, Bel 1996 and Llop 2020 for Catalan; and Laka 1990 and Bel 1996, a.o., for Spanish). This structure further motivates the analysis of the complementizer as occupying a functional head in the CP-field. Note that in the case of (23), negation is available even in the presence of transparency effects, as shown with climbing of the reflexive clitic.<sup>16</sup>

- (22) *Va accedir* [<sub>CP</sub> *a* [<sub>NegP</sub> *no* [<sub>TP</sub> *formar part del comitè*]]]                      (Catalan)  
 ‘(S)he agreed not to serve on the committee.’  
 (23) *S'intenten*[<sub>CP</sub> *de* [<sub>NegP</sub> *no* [<sub>TP</sub> *fer* (concerts) *enlloc* ]]]                      (Catalan)  
 ‘They try not to do concerts anywhere.’  
 (24) *Decidí* [<sub>CP</sub> *de* [<sub>NegP</sub> *no* [<sub>TP</sub> *tomar alcohol*]]]                      (Spanish)

<sup>15</sup> Fernández-Sánchez (2016) analyses this type of clitic left dislocation as parentheticals.

<sup>16</sup> One could argue that negation in (23) involves constituent negation, as previous analyses have suggested (Cardinaletti, Shlonsky 2004 for Italian; Magro 2004 and Andrade 2010 for Portuguese). However, the licensing of NPIs shows that these cases involve true sentential negation, where the NPI *enlloc* ‘nowhere’ is licensed by the embedded negative operator *no* (Paradis 2024: 12).

‘I decided to not drink alcohol.’

In conclusion, the tests presented in this section establish that the *a/de* + infinitive, when introduced by a control verb, occupy a Fin position. This confirms that ‘prepositional complementizers’ are not prepositions and should be analysed as genuine complementizers instead, even when clitic climbing obtains. A direct consequence of this analysis is that restructuring can be biclausal in some languages, or at least with some predicates (in section 4, we show that restructuring is monoclausal in with Old Italian and Old French aspectual verbs, despite the presence of *a/de*). However, this is only one part of the picture. In the following sections, we demonstrate that being a real complementizer does not necessarily mean being a C-element, challenging traditional assumptions about the structural position of complementizers in the clause – and therefore, re-evaluating clause size across different environments in Romance.

### 3. MID COMPLEMENTIZERS

We argue that complementizers are not necessarily merged in the CP-layer, and they can instead appear lower on the structure.<sup>17</sup> In what follows, we discuss and analyse data from Romanian, which we then contrast with data from Catalan, to demonstrate that the elements *a/de* can be merged in the TP-field.

#### 3.1. Romanian *a*

The case of Romanian *a* (from the Latin preposition *ad*) is particularly relevant here: *a* is a morpheme that introduces infinitives. Its position is sandwiched between the complementizer *de* (25) and the negative particle *nu* (26), and it forms a cluster with the infinitive it introduces. Only the negative marker *nu* (which behaves as a syntactic clitic, see Alboiu 2000: 47), pronominal clitics, and adverbial clitics can intervene between *a* and the infinitive, as shown in (26) – no phrasal element can appear, suggesting syntactic adjacency. According to Dobrovie-Sorin (1999), *a* is a clitic. Note that Romanian infinitives raise out of the VP-domain (Motapanyane and Avram 2000: 153, Alboiu 2000: 43), specifically to the low TP-field according to Schifano (2018), or potentially higher as it precedes all Cinquean adverbs (p.c. Alexandru Nicolae).

- (25) Se        satură        de a pleca        mereu ultimul. (Romanian)  
REFL gets.fed.up de *a* leave.INF always last-one  
‘He gets fed up with always being the last one to leave.’ (Pană Dindelegan 2013: 207)
- (26) **a**    nu    și-l        mai        tot        căuta. (Romanian)  
*a*    NOT REFL=it more        always search.INF  
‘to not look for it continuously.’ (Pană Dindelegan 2013: 213)

Assuming that *de* occupies Fin, example (25), coupled with a series of tests conducted by Pană Dindelegan (2013: section 4.2), strongly suggests that the morpheme *a* does not occupy a C-head, but a lower position, within the TP-field (see also Nedelcu

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One could argue that negation in (23) involves constituent

2013). Further evidence stems from comparing the distribution of infinitival inflectional markers: Romanian *a* is present with subject infinitives in the same way that English *to* is; whereas the morphological inflection is realised as a suffix in French (27). This suggests that the domains of *to* + infinitive, *a* + infinitive, and verbal stem + *-re* could be equivalent crosslinguistically. If correct, then we are dealing with the realisation of a head in the TP-field – without it being necessarily inflectional, see also (29) and discussion below. Note however that since *a* precedes the negation and pronominal clitics, it must be situated very high in the TP-field, close to the low CP-field (Alexandru Nicolae draws our attention to the contrast *not to read* vs. *a nu citi*).

- (27) a. [TP **To** read] is a pleasure.  
 b. [TP **A** citi] e o bucurie. (Romanian)  
*a* read.INF is a pleasure (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994: 83)  
 c. [TP **Lire**] est un plaisir. (French)  
 read.INF is a pleasure

The view that *a* is in the TP-field has indeed been challenged in the literature. Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: section 3.1.1.2), for instance, supports the view that *a* projects a CP based on the facts that (i) *nu* normally precedes T-elements yet it follows *a* (26), (ii) *a* + infinitive can be introduced by a preposition and behave as a nominal element, and (iii) the co-occurrence of a Wh-element with *a* is ungrammatical, as per the doubly filled C filter. According to her (see also Isac 1994), *a* is merged in C and undergoes incorporation with T, rendering the two heads indistinguishable at Spell Out.<sup>18</sup> According to Nicolae (2015: 59), C does not split between Force and Fin in the case of infinitives, therefore *a* occupies the ‘fused’ C-head. The Fin analysis of *a* is put forward by Hill (2017) for Early Modern Romanian, on the basis that *nu* is generated between C and T in (26), and that a Focus can occur to its left (28).

- (28) Cela ce poate [Focus toate] a face. (Romanian)  
 that who can all *a* do.INF  
 ‘the one who can do them all.’ (Hill 2017: 159)

It is not clear to us why *a* could not be in the TP-field in (28), while Fin would be null (if even projected at all). Furthermore, it is uncontested that *de* in (25) is a true high complementizer,<sup>19</sup> specifically a Fin-head (cf. Rizzi 1997, Hill 2014), which immediately cancels the analysis of *a* as being in the CP-field unless we make additional assumptions<sup>20</sup>.

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negation, as previous analyses have suggested (Cardinaletti, Shlonsky 2004 for Italian; Magro 2004 and Andrade 2010 for Portuguese). However, the licensing of NPIs shows that these cases involve true sentential negation, where the NPI *enlloc* ‘nowhere’ is licensed by the embedded negative

operator *no* (Paradis 2024: 12).

ement traditionally stems from the fact that it follows Topics (Rizzi 1997). In the context of Romanian, this construction is hard to test due to the predominance of the subjunctive, yet see Hill (2014: §2.3) for examples from Early Modern Romanian with the sequence [TopicP XP [FinP *de*]].

<sup>20</sup> Hill (2017) proposes a split Fin-head in Romanian to host both *de* (for non-finiteness) and *a* (for modality). We do not adopt this assumption as it does not seem to be found crosslinguistically.

Furthermore, consider the fact that *a* can be absent in some contexts, notably when introduced by the modal *putea* (29a). According to Hill (2017), such clauses indicate monoclausality, and more specifically the absence of a CP hosting *a*. The comparison with English is relevant again. Bare infinitives are possible with modals and causatives notably, and the absence of *to* in (29b) and (29c) is not a direct reflex of the lack of a CP, but is due to the absence of a TP. As a consequence, (29a) can be analysed as a monoclausal environment lacking a TP to host *a*. This further confirms that *a* and *to* are not inflectional (cf. (27)), but complementizers merged in the TP-field.

- (29) a. Pot (\***a**) cânta. (Romanian)  
           can *a* sing.INF  
           ‘I can sing.’  
       b. I can (\***to**) sing.  
       c. Make it (\***to**) stop.

While the ‘complementizer’ *a* is in the TP-field, it must nonetheless occupy a high position, given that it precedes NegP and other clitics adjoined to T (30). Building on several authors, we take *a* to head a MoodP (Cornilescu 2000: 85, Motapanyane and Avram 2000: 153, Alboiu 2000: 54, Hill 2014: §2.3). This correctly predicts the absence of *a* in restructuring clauses like (29a), as they involve reduced structures that do not project up to MoodP.<sup>21</sup>

- (30) [<sub>FinP</sub> de [<sub>MoodP</sub> **a** [<sub>NegP</sub> nu [<sub>TP</sub> clitics+verb [<sub>vVP</sub> ~~verb~~ ]]]]]

MoodP is the highest projection of the TP-domain, just below CP (Schütze 2004).<sup>22</sup> This closeness accounts for the apparent duality of *a* as T/C. The role of this inflectional head is to define the property of the clause, namely non-finite. Where no TP is projected (and therefore, no MoodP), as in (29), the interpretation is *de facto* non-finite.

### 3.2 Catalan *de* with modal verbs

What we call ‘mid complementizers’ is a phenomenon attested elsewhere in Romance. Consider the verb *haver de* ‘must’, a root modal in most Catalan varieties.<sup>23</sup>

- (31) Els nous edificis s’han d’acabar abans de l’estiu.  
       the new buildings REFL=have of finish.INF before the=summer’  
       ‘The new buildings must be finished before the summer’

<sup>21</sup> Evidence suggests that *putea* selects a domain that does not project up to TP: the Mood-head *a* is absent, no NegP can be projected, and there is no T-head to host clitics (Motapanyane and Avram 2000: 152-153).

<sup>22</sup> While the split-CP and the split-VP are now standard assumptions in the literature, the split-TP hypothesis remains somewhat under-researched. Our proposal nonetheless capitalises on Cinque’s (1999, 2004) cartographic work, also implemented by Schifano (2018), which proposes a version of the structure Mood-T-Asp (in this order) – and we assume that in Romanian, NegP is sandwiched between MoodP and TP. Another version of the split-TP has been proposed by Matticchio and Sanfelici (2021) for Ancient Greek.

<sup>23</sup> *haver de* + infinitive has other uses in Catalan. We leave their analysis for further research.

Modals are widely accepted to be part of the restructuring class and, as we have seen in section 2.3 with control verbs, the presence of *de* does not block restructuring effects (this is further depicted in (31) with long object movement and climbing of the reflexive clitic). At first sight, this *de* looks similar to the elements we analysed in section 2. However, following the tests given in section 2.1, if *de* was a fully fledged preposition it would be pronominalisable with a locative or partitive clitic, contrary to facts (32a). Furthermore, we demonstrated in section 2.2 that high complementizers can be pronominalisable with an accusative clitic, which is ruled out here (32b). In what follows, we demonstrate instead that this *de* is a modality marker in the TP-field – similar to Romanian *a*.

- (32) a. \*Hi/N'            haig. (Catalan)  
           there/PART=I-have  
       b. \*Ho                haig  
           CL.ACC.NEUT=I-have

Before further discussing the position of *de*, let us consider the size and the nature of the domain it selects. Following Rigau (1999: §5), we take *de* to select for an embedded defective T, which is diagnosed by the impossibility of inserting negation (33) and activating the infinitival left periphery with clitic left dislocation (34). These two examples highlight a stark contrast with the behaviour of high complementizers discussed in section 2.2.

- (33) \*Hi    hauries        **de** no anar. (Catalan)  
       there    would-have of NEG go.INF  
       ‘You shouldn’t go’  
       (34) \*Hauries, a la piscina, **d’** anar-hi        més sovint. (Catalan)  
           should    to the pool    of go.INF=there    more often  
           ‘You should go more often to the pool’

It is also important to note that the root modal verb and *de* are not necessarily strictly adjacent, which indicates that *de* is not merged with *haver* but instead is merged in a lower position. The lack of adjacency is illustrated by Catalan varieties displaying the presuppositional negative marker *pas* ‘at all’, which can appear between *haver* and *de* (35) (see Llop and Paradis 2023 for a dialectal distribution of *pas* in restructuring contexts).

- (35) No    hi        havies    *pas*        **d’**anar. (Catalan)  
       NEG there had        NEG    of=go.INF  
       ‘You do not have to go there at all.’

A similar scenario, revealing that *de* is not part of the matrix verb *haver*, is attested in Northern Catalan. In this variety, *pas* is the sentential negation, and it can also intervene between both elements (36). Note further that clitic climbing occurs in both (35) and (36), past *de*.

- (36) Hi    he    *pas*        **d’**anar.            (Northern Catalan)

there have NEG of=go.INF  
 ‘I do not have to go there.’

These data offer empirical evidence for the position of *de*. First, the negative elements – *pas* as a presuppositional marker (35) and *pas* as the sentential negation (36) – belong to the matrix clause, which suggests that *de* is an element of the embedded domain. The impossibility of having embedded negation in (33) indicates a defective infinitival structure (namely, a defective T), contrary to the control verbs analysed in section 2. Following Llop & Paradis (2023), the negative presuppositional marker in (35) is located in the left periphery of the matrix verb, whereas the sentential negation in Northern Catalan illustrated in (36) occupies a position between TP and *v*P (like in French, see Llop 2020). We use these facts to argue that root modal verbs appearing with *de* take an infinitival T<sub>def</sub> preceded by MoodP, itself encoded by *de* (37).

(37) [MoodP **de** [T<sub>def</sub> T [*v*P [VP...]]]]

In conclusion, Romanian *a* + infinitive and Catalan *haver de* + infinitive offer evidence that complementizers can be merged lower than CP, specifically in a high functional head of the TP-field. The differences between the two languages can be captured by analysing the size of the embedded domain: while (non-restructuring predicates in) Romanian can project up to FinP (i.e., giving rise to *de a*) and select a non-defective TP (i.e., allowing embedded negation), Catalan *haver* takes in its complement a reduced clause in the form of MoodP (i.e., it does not project up to FinP), which itself selects a defective TP (i.e., hence why negation is ruled out). The position of the complementizer is therefore a by-product of clause-size, rather than a reliable test.

#### 4. LOW COMPLEMENTIZERS

Building on the observation that complementizers might be merged in various positions on the clausal spine, we show here that some varieties offer evidence for a much lower set of complementizers that occur immediately above the *v*/VP-field, but still lower than the TP-field. The data we discuss here come from Medieval Romance, Old Italian and Old French in particular, where aspectual verbs are followed by *a/de*, as illustrated in (38) and (39) with inceptive and terminative verbs respectively.

- (38) a. la terra se comenza **a** rescaldare. (Old Italian)  
 the earth REFL=begins to warm-up.INF  
 ‘The earth begins to warm up.’ (*Restoro d’Arezzo*, L. I, cap. 23, p. 47.9)
- b. Ascanius comence **a** rire. (Old French)  
 Ascanius starts to laugh.INF  
 ‘Ascanius starts laughing.’ (*Roman d’Eneas*, p. 93, v. 3045)
- (39) a. E così non si finirebbe mai **di** dire delle donne. (Old Italian)  
 and thus not REFL=finished ever to say.INF of=the women  
 ‘And thus, one would never finish speaking about women.’  
 (*Trecentonovelle*, p. 445.39)
- b. que je ne vous finai **de** querre. (Old French)

that I not you finished to look.INF  
 ‘that I couldn’t stop looking for you.’ (*Suite de Merlin*, p. 72)

Inceptive and terminative verbs are known to be restructuring predicates in Romance (Rizzi 1982, Cinque 2001, 2004), which is diagnosed here through the availability of clitic climbing, shown in (38a) for Old Italian and in (39b) for Old French (as elsewhere in the article, the clitic that climbs is underlined). While some authors have argued that *a/de* are (defective) C-heads in this context (Kayne 1991, Landau 2000, Manzini 2022), or T-heads (Martineau 1990), we revisit this claim in light of new data and demonstrate instead that these complementizers are merged between TP and vP when introduced by inceptive and terminative predicates – in these languages at least.

The first piece of evidence that we use to argue that the complementizers in (38) and (39) are low is drawn from Martineau and Motapanyane’s (2000) observation that when a clitic climbs over *a/de* in Middle French, adjacency between the complementizer and the infinitive is systematic. A similar remark is made by Olivier (2022) and Olivier et al. (2023) on the basis that these elements are often written *scriptio continua* in Medieval French legal texts (40), where *a aler* is written together as *aaler*, which suggests that speakers perceive *a* as an affixal morpheme – Rainsford (2011) analyses *a/de* as prosodic clitics, further suggesting syntactic adjacency.

(40) que il commencera maintenant **aaler** sen. (Old French)  
 that he will.begin now to=go.INF REFL=PART  
 ‘that now, he will begin to leave.’ (*Grand Coutumier de Normandie*, Seq. 107)

This adjacency is found with aspectual main verbs only; in environments where *a/de* is selected by non-aspectual verbs, we find evidence for projections such as embedded NegP (41) or VoiceP (42), assuming Cinque’s (1999) analysis of low adverb *bien*.

(41) que il lui promirent **de non** aller en leur pays en nulle manière. (O. French)  
 that they him=promised to not go.INF in their country in no manner  
 ‘that they promised him to not go to their country in any way.’

(*Chronique de Morée*, p. 393)

(42) et dist que cil qui les autres enseignent **a bien** faire... (Old French)  
 and said that those who the others teach to well do.INF  
 ‘and said that those who teach others to do good...’ (*Vie de sainte Bathilde*, p.35)

The same holds true for Old Italian, where only non-aspectual verbs can embed several functional projections. This is shown in the following with a negated infinitive (43) and a fronted object to the left of the infinitive (44), which we take to target the low left periphery (cf. Belletti 2004).

(43) ci conviene guardare **di non** fare. (Old Italian)  
 to.us is.convenient watch.INF to not do.INF  
 ‘It is advisable for us to make sure not to do (it).’

(*Capitoli della Compagnia di San Gilio*)

(44) m’ài miso **a tale** donna amare. (Old Italian)  
 me=have put to such woman love.INF

‘you have made me love such a woman.’ (*Le antiche rime volgari*, p. 178)

To summarise this latter point, non-aspectual verbs allow functional material between *a/de* and the infinitive. We now turn to aspectual verbs. We find no instances of an infinitive introduced by ‘aspectual’ *a/de* being negated, strongly suggesting that this syntactic environment does not project up to NegP. Furthermore, the absence of adverbs from the TP-domain (cf. Cinque 1999, 2004) provides additional evidence of the reduced functional structure introduced by aspectual predicates. We therefore conclude that in both Old French and Old Italian, the functional layers between *a/de* and the infinitive are only present when the matrix clause contains a *non*-aspectual predicate. The structure of the embedded clauses in (41) to (44) can therefore be assumed to be [CP *a/de* [TP [*v*P ...]]], whereas we take the obligatory adjacency between ‘aspectual’ *a/de* and the infinitive in (38) to (40) to indicate a lack of CP and TP.

Martineau and Motapanyane (2000) draw an interesting conclusion, namely that there once existed two series of homophonous complementizers in French. They argue that the ‘aspectual’ ones “cannot be defined as either C or P and [were] lost during the development of Modern French” (page 217). Similar claims are made by Ledgeway (2015: 158) and Groothuis (2022: 38) in the context of Italo-Romance, for which they argue that *di* is acategorical and can occupy either C, T, or *v* depending on the matrix predicate that selects it. In recent work, Olivier et al. (2023) have proposed that ‘aspectual’ complementizers occupy a *v*P-related position, while Olivier et al. (2024: 15) take *a* to be merged in a functional head just above *v*P, a hypothesis that we adopt and adapt in what follows (see also Tellier 2018 on *à* in Modern French, which she argues is generated in a low MoodP and then moves to Fin).

The second piece of evidence for the low position of ‘aspectual’ *a/de* stems from the fact that both Old French and Old Italian present a more flexible order than their modern counterparts, which can notably be observed through scrambling (Poletto 2006, 2014, Martins 2011, Salvesen 2011, Wolfe 2021). Let us first consider the position targeted by the scrambled phrase with *non*-aspectual predicates. This was already shown in (44) for Old Italian, where the internal argument of the infinitive is fronted within *v*P. The same construction is illustrated in (45) for Old French.

- (45) Qu’il ne pensoit a nul bien faire. (Old French)  
 that=he not thought to any good do.INF  
 ‘That he did not think of doing any good.’ (*Miracles de Nostre Dame*, p. 121, v. 7)

Examples (44) and (45), which show the *non*-aspectual *a/de* construction, illustrate that the scrambled phrase targets a *v*P-internal position between the complementizer and the infinitive: the order is [*a/de*-XP<sub>SCRAMBLED</sub>-V<sub>INF</sub>]. In the context of aspectual predicates, however, the order is markedly different. Consider examples (46) and (47) which, like (44) and (45), contain occurrences of scrambling: with ‘aspectual’ *a/de*, the order is now [XP<sub>SCRAMBLED</sub>-*a/de*-V<sub>INF</sub>]. Capitalising on Poletto’s (2014) analysis, we take this construction to involve short scrambling to a position in the lower aspectual field.

- (46) Si li commence noveles a conter. (Old French)  
 thus him=starts stories to tell.INF  
 ‘Thus, he starts telling him stories.’ (*Prise d’Orange*, p. 50)

- (47) E cominciamo il palagio a guardare. (Old Italian)  
 and began the palace to look.INF  
 ‘We began to look at the palace.’ (Poletto 2014: 108)

Before elaborating on the positions of the scrambled XP and of the complementizer in (46) and (47), let us posit an analysis for the position of the infinitive. Since Kayne (1991), V-movement of infinitives is often analysed in conjunction with clitic placement, on the assumption that enclisis is derived when the infinitive raises out of VP (cf. Modern Standard Italian), whereas proclisis obtains when the infinitive remains low (cf. Modern French) – a distribution that is further revealed by the placement of adverbs (Schifano 2018). Assuming that clitics are realised on *v* through Agree (Mavrogiorgos 2010, Roberts 2010, Gallego 2016), it follows that the infinitive must target a position directly above *v*P in languages that have enclisis, which is the case of Old Italian and Old French (see Olivier 2022, 2025 for infinitival enclisis in the latter language, and see also example (40) of the present article). We therefore conclude that the string [XP<sub>SCRAMBLED</sub>-*a/de*-V<sub>INF</sub>] appears just above *v*P in examples (46) and (47).

Assuming that aspectual predicates are functional and merged in the low TP-field (Cinque 2006, Poletto 2014), we propose that ‘aspectual’ *a/de* merges in Asp, a functional projection selected by aspectual predicates that triggers V-movement of the infinitive. A direct consequence of this proposal is that restructuring clauses that feature an aspectual predicate with *a/de* in Old Italian and Old French are monoclausal, unlike restructuring clauses headed by a control verb with *a/de* in Catalan and Spanish *deista* varieties which are biclausal (see sections 2.3 and 2.4). The structure of sentence (47) is given in (48), and that of (40) with an enclitic is given in (49) – we further assume that the finite verb targets T, which we do not show to lighten the structure. We also leave out intermediary traces.<sup>24</sup>

- (48) [<sub>TP</sub> cominciamo [<sub>TopP/FocP</sub> il palagio [<sub>AspP</sub> a+guardare [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> guardare il palagio ]]]]  
 (49) [<sub>TP</sub> il commencera [<sub>AspP</sub> a+aler [<sub>vP</sub> sen [<sub>VP</sub> aler sen ]]]]

As mentioned above, we take the scrambled XP in (48) to target a position in Belletti’s (2004) low left periphery, which therefore implies that we do not take monoclausality to be *stricto sensu*: there is functional life between the matrix predicate and the infinitive. Note that this AspP projection is an extension of the *v*P-domain, given that it occurs to the right of the low left periphery – it is not a projection of the lower TP-domain.

‘Low’ complementizers are not specific to Medieval Romance languages, they have also been observed across several modern varieties (Damonte 2011, Ledgeway 2015, Groothuis 2022), as shown notably in (50) with an aspectual predicate, and in (51) with a modal that embeds a finite verb.

- (50) Finiru [<sub>vP</sub> **mi** lavuranu]. (Southern Calabrian)  
 finished to work.INF  
 ‘They finished working.’ (Groothuis 2022: 38)  
 (51) Voli [<sub>vP</sub> **cu** vveni ti notti]. (Northern Salentino)  
 wants to arrive.INF of night

<sup>24</sup> Contrarily to Rizzi’s (1982) original claim, we assume that (49) still shows restructuring despite the absence of clitic climbing – the latter being a facultative epiphenomenon (Paradis 2024).

‘He wants to arrive tonight.’ (Ledgeway 2015: 158)

To conclude, complementizers can target low functional heads within the structure, typically associated with the *v*P-domain. The data we analysed here have never been examined in relation to the nature of the complementizer before. Additionally, we have further refined the analysis of aspectual *a/de* as low, *v*P-related Asp-heads when selected by inceptive and terminative predicates in these varieties.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The careful empirical examination conducted in this article enables us to draw two main conclusions, in line with our objectives: (i) complementizers are not restricted to the CP-field, (ii) clause size varies both at the crosslinguistic level and within a given language.

(i) The most salient takeaway of the present article is the demonstration that complementizers can be merged in different positions on the clausal spine. We first argued that ‘prepositional complementizers’ is an ill-defined term, given that some instances of *a/de* + infinitive are genuine PPs, whereas others are CPs. We further refined our formal understanding of the syntax of complementizers in showing that *a/de* can be merged in the low CP-field (i.e., Fin), in the high TP-field (i.e., Mood), or in the high *v*P-field (i.e., Asp). As such, what defines a ‘complementizer’ cannot be that it is the head of CP (although in some instances, it is). In the case of Romance, the Latin prepositions *ad* and *de* have grammaticalised into acategorical elements that signal the presence of an infinitival complement, without bearing any information about the size of that complement.

(ii) The data we analysed illustrate three typologies of embedded clauses: those that project up to the CP-field (e.g., Catalan and Spanish control verbs that take *de* + infinitive), those that project up to the TP-field (e.g., Romanian *a* + infinitive, Catalan *haver de* + infinitive), and those that project up to the *v*P-field (e.g., Old Italian and Old French aspectual *a/de* + infinitive). The size of the embedded clauses is defined by the matrix predicate, in which the complementizer plays almost no part. As a consequence, we do not take the notion of ‘size’ to be binary in the context of restructuring (e.g., either strictly biclausal or strictly monoclausal), in spite of much of the literature since the late 1970s to this day. We propose instead that what is usually called monoclausality can feature functional layers, which is reminiscent of Tortora’s (2014) claim that restructuring can involve what she calls ‘light biclausality’ – while our respective perspectives appear to differ, our conclusions meet and complete each other. As we demonstrated, transparency effects are available in both monoclausal and biclausal environments. The term ‘restructuring’, therefore, must be handled with care.

Lastly, we must point out that although this article compares data from Catalan, Spanish, Romanian, Old Italian, and Old French, it is limited to a handful of languages and predicates, therefore we leave open to future research the question of whether more functional heads than the one discussed here can host complementizers – also beyond *a/de*.

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